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ABSTRACT

The most controversial form of school choice is the voucher system, which allows families to use tax dollars, in the form of vouchers, to pay for tuition at private schools. The Parental Choice in Education Initiative, slated to be on the California June 1994 election ballot, will give residents the opportunity to vote on a statewide school-voucher program. A survey of private schools in the state was conducted to determine the availability, affordability, and accessibility of private schools to voucher-redeeming students from public schools. Highlights of the findings include the following: three quarters of the schools said they would participate in a voucher system; low- and medium-tuition schools are more likely to participate than high-tuition schools; most of the private schools are nearly full and those open to vouchers could expand by less than 15 percent without additional construction or staffing; without expanding, private schools could accommodate less than one percent of public school enrollment. Two other findings are that 60 percent of the schools charge less than $2,600 per year, the amount for which vouchers could be redeemed; and private-school enrollment is 40 percent minority and contains few low-income or non-English-speaking students. The body of the report details each of these findings and illustrates them with 22 tables and 8 figures. An appendix includes a comparison of responding schools and private schools statewide and a description of survey development and administration. (JPT)

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What A Voucher Could Buy

A SURVEY OF CALIFORNIA'S PRIVATE SCHOOLS

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What a Voucher Could Buy

A Survey of California's Private Schools

Marcella R. Dianda and Ronald G. Corwin

Southwest Regional Laboratory

February 1993

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PREFACE

The most controversial form of parental choice permits families to use tax dollars, in the form of vouchers, to pay for tuition at private schools, K-12. This is the key provision of a voucher initiative in California that will appear on the June 1994 election ballot as a constitutional referendum. If the initiative passes, California will implement the nation's first statewide school voucher program.

No one is sure how a voucher program of this scale will affect either public or private schools. This report focuses on private schools' probable responses to a voucher program and provides answers to the following questions of interest to educators in California and across the nation. Are private schools a serious threat to public schools? Will private schools participate in a voucher program? How many voucher-redeeming students from public schools can private schools enroll? Where can students expect openings? In low-tuition schools? In schools with religious affiliations? How accessible are private schools to students from public schools and to whom are they accessible?

In spring 1992, the Southwest Regional Laboratory mailed a survey to all private schools in California eligible to participate in a program that would provide every school-age child with a $2,600 voucher. Survey items focused on the availability, affordability, and accessibility of private schools to voucher-redeeming students from public schools.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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INTRODUCTION

California has been in the forefront of the educational voucher movement for more than a decade. A highly publicized voucher initiative failed to qualify for the June 1980 ballot as a constitutional referendum.[1] Since then, choice legislation that includes private schools has been introduced repeatedly in the state legislature; three separate voucher proposals were considered in 1991 alone.[2] In 1991-92, another voucher ballot initiative, "The Parental Choice in Education Initiative," garnered widespread publicity. Although the initiative failed to qualify for the November 1992 ballot by a narrow margin—and some say a technicality—it will appear on the June 1994 ballot.[3]

The Parental Choice in Education Initiative calls for a statewide choice program that includes private schools. Under the terms of the proposal, every school-age child in California would receive a voucher worth $2,600.[4] The voucher would accompany any child who moved from a public to a private school. Children already enrolled in private schools would use their vouchers to pay or defray tuition fees. However, their participation in the voucher would be phased in two years after the initiative's passage. The $2,600 estimate is based on specific language that directs the state to provide a scholarship (i.e., voucher) of at least 50% of the amount state and local governments spent per student in 1991-92. Any private school, religious and nonreligious, with an enrollment of 25 or more students can become a scholarship-redeeming school after meeting certain legal requirements and any existing regulations applicable to private schools.[5]

The Parental Choice in Education Initiative was front-page news in spring 1992. Its backers, a group of business leaders and educators who formed the Choice in Education League, launched an aggressive petition-signing campaign to qualify the initiative for the ballot. The state's public education interests, most notably the California Teachers Association, mounted a massive drive to block the signature gathering. Both sides' campaigns were intense.

No voucher program of comparable scale exists. While 20 states have implemented some form of parental choice, there are no statewide voucher programs like the one proposed for California, although voters did defeat a similar ballot initiative in Colorado in November 1992. Nearly all states limit parents' options to public schools.[6] Currently, the only choice program in the nation that provides public subsidies to private schools is in Milwaukee. Restricted to low-income children in a single district and to nonreligious private schools, the Milwaukee Choice Program differs markedly in intent and scope from the initiative in California.[7]

The spring 1992 campaigns to advance and defeat The Parental Choice in Education Initiative provided a realistic and timely context in which to probe how private schools are likely to respond to a voucher program. With this in mind, in May 1992, the Southwest Regional Laboratory (SWRL) mailed a survey to all private schools in California eligible to participate in the voucher program if the initiative passed.[8] SWRL included the following key question:

> **If California implements the proposed Parental Choice in Education ballot initiative, or a similar measure, how likely is your school to accept transfer students from public schools in exchange for a tuition scholarship of $2,500 or $2,600?**

Seventeen additional survey questions asked about the private schools' enrollment, tuition fees, admissions requirements, teaching and administrative staff, salary structures, and student populations. SWRL also asked respondents to speculate how their participation in a voucher program would affect enrollment and tuition, as well as changes that participation might precipitate in staffing, curriculum, or in school facilities to accommodate additional students.

SWRL mailed the survey to all private schools with a student enrollment of 25 or more listed in the *California Private School Directory, 1991*, published by the California Department of Education. Thirty-seven percent (N = 1,004) of the sample completed and returned the survey. To determine if the respondents were representative of all private schools in the state, we compared schools that completed the survey to the state population of private schools on four parameters: school affiliation; school type (e.g., elementary, K-12, ungraded); geographic location; and average student enrollment. In all cases, comparisons were between the respondents and all private schools in the state data base with enrollments of 25 or more. We concluded that private schools completing the survey are comparable to private schools statewide on these key parameters. The comparisons are discussed in the Appendix.

Unfortunately, we could not compare the respondents to private schools statewide on another key feature—annual tuition. California does not gather information on tuition fees from private schools. Therefore, the tuition fees charged by schools that completed the SWRL survey may not be comparable to private schools statewide. Over half of the schools in the survey group charge annual tuition of less than $2,600, the amount of the proposed statewide voucher.

This report summarizes and interprets the results of the survey and is organized as follows. First, we lay out some of the key issues debated by choice proponents and opponents. Next, we highlight the major findings from the survey. Detailed findings follow. Technical aspects of the survey are in the Appendix.

KEY ISSUES ABOUT VOUCHERS

Choice proposals are especially controversial when they enable parents to choose between public and private schools as is the case in the California ballot initiative. The continuing debate over vouchers centers on several issues. The first, and the main issue that SWRL's survey addressed, is whether voucher programs will give private schools more access to the public school market. Some observers maintain that private schools will be in a more favorable position than they are now to compete with public schools for students because vouchers help defray tuition costs. Some believe this new source of competition will pressure public schools to change if they want to retain their market share of students and, consequently, government funds.[9] Supposedly, such competition will fuel increases in educational quality, particularly among public schools. But how much of a competitive challenge will private schools pose? Are private schools a sufficient force in number and available student openings to seriously affect public school enrollment? And, what kinds of schools will be available to voucher-redeeming students from public schools?

A closely related controversy centers on how many private schools will participate in a voucher program and whether the interested ones will modify their staffing and admission procedures. Some proponents maintain that most private schools will participate in voucher programs.[10] Opponents say this is not the case. They argue that many private schools are filled to near capacity, have no plans to expand, and therefore, vouchers will only subsidize the education of children already attending private schools.[11] In fact, there is almost no information about how many private schools might actually participate in a statewide voucher program. If they choose to participate, do they have the staff and space to accommodate anticipated enrollment increases? How many voucher-redeeming public school students can existing private schools enroll?

Another intensely disputed issue is whether private schools will select the best students from the public sector or whether they will be receptive to public school children who are having the most difficulty academically. Opponents charge that private schools will skim the "best and brightest" public school students, while proponents maintain that private schools educate students of widely varying academic ability and would continue to do so under a voucher program.[12] What are private schools' admissions criteria? Are students expected to meet high academic and behavioral standards?

Choice proponents also maintain that private schools provide high-quality programs and smaller classes. Opponents counter that such advantages are offset by staffs composed largely of teachers who are not licensed by the state to teach in public schools.[13] Will the private schools receptive to voucher students from public schools offer small classes? What proportion of private school teachers is certified to teach in California's public schools?

Perhaps the most sensational issue raised is whether private schools reflect an equitable socioeconomic and racial balance. Choice opponents charge that private schools are elitist bastions serving well-to-do, predominantly Anglo students. Choice opponents complain that tuition to most private schools is too high for most families, even if they were given $2,600.[14] Proponents refute this allegation by pointing to the many private schools with low tuition that serve large proportions of poor and minority students. They also note the availability of scholarships in high-tuition private schools.[15] Which private schools have tuition that voucher-redeeming students from public schools can afford? Which private schools provide scholarships for students?

Private schools often conjure up stereotypes. Some people think of them as elite and exclusive. To others, they are open to a wide range of students, but focus on a particular religious orientation. Still other people seem to equate private schools with academic commitment. One purpose of SWRL's choice survey is to examine such stereotypes.

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

How likely are private schools to participate in a voucher program?

- Seventy-five percent say they are "very likely" or "likely" to participate and accept voucher-redeeming students from public schools.
- Low-tuition schools (i.e., schools with annual tuition of less than $2,600) and moderate-tuition schools (i.e., schools charging between $2,600 to $4,999 annually) are especially receptive to the prospect of vouchers; over 80% of them are either very likely or likely to accept students from public schools. Only 56% of high-tuition schools (i.e., schools charging $5,000 or more annually) rate their participation as likely.
- Catholic and other religious schools view vouchers more favorably than nonreligious schools; 84% of the former would accept voucher students, while only 62% of nonreligious schools expect to participate.

How many spaces will be available for voucher students from public schools?

- Most private schools are nearly full; half of the voucher-receptive schools can expand by less than 15% without additional construction or staffing.
- Less than 1% of public school students can expect to find additional spaces in private schools under existing conditions; even the most generous estimates yield no more than a 6% expansion.
- High-tuition schools have the least room; 25% are at enrollment capacity and 75% can expand by no more than 15%.
- Catholic schools and other religious schools also tend to be full; over 50% of Catholic schools are at 95% capacity (although additional spaces may be available in some under-enrolled schools and in schools that are closed and could be reopened).

How affordable are voucher-receptive private schools?

- Most schools willing to accept students with vouchers from public schools are affordable; 62% charge $2,600 per year, the amount of California's proposed voucher.
- Catholic schools are the most affordable; 90% charge less than $3,000 per year. Catholic elementary schools are the most affordable; 94% of elementary schools, but only 41% of high schools, charge less than $2,600 tuition.
- Tuition may increase slightly under a voucher program; 40% of the voucher-receptive schools now charging under $2,600 say they would increase their annual tuition if they participated in a statewide voucher program.

Which public school students will have access to private schools?

- Private schools are most accessible to students with satisfactory academic qualifications; 78% of voucher-receptive schools require prospective students to demonstrate grade-level achievement.
- Currently, minority students have access to private schools; across the respondents, 40% of the student enrollment is minority.
- Minority students are particularly well-represented in Catholic schools and those charging lower tuition; about half of the students are minority.
- Few students from low-income families attend private schools; in most schools (88%), less than one fifth of the students are eligible for federally-subsidized breakfast or lunch.
- Families' ability to pay annual tuition is another major consideration among voucher-receptive schools. It is at least as important as students' academic skills in most schools.
- Most low- and moderate-tuition schools, but fewer high-tuition schools, expect parents to have the financial means to pay tuition fees.
- Private schools now enroll very few language minority students (i.e., students needing non-English language support); in fewer than 20% of the schools is enrollment of such students as high as 10%.
- Low-income students from public schools who gain admission to private schools will find:

(a) needs-based scholarships that are most available in high-tuition schools, the schools least likely to participate in a voucher program; almost one third provide scholarships to 20 - 40% of their students.

(b) limited school access by bus or public transportation; in 80% of voucher-receptive schools, three quarters of the students arrive by private car; others walk to school.

SURVEY FINDINGS

The survey findings reported in this section address the following: How likely are private schools to participate in a voucher program? What kinds of schools will be available to voucher students from public schools? How many spaces are likely to be available to students from public schools who use their voucher at a private school? How affordable are voucher-receptive private schools? Which public school students are likely to have access to them? And, will a voucher program cause private schools to add classrooms and staff to accommodate voucher-redeeming students from public schools?

We discuss findings for all schools and for schools grouped by religious affiliation (i.e., Catholic, other religious, and nonreligious) and by annual tuition level (i.e., low tuition = under $2,600; medium tuition = $2,600 - $4,999; and high tuition = $5,000 or more).

HOW LIKELY ARE PRIVATE SCHOOLS TO PARTICIPATE IN A VOUCHER PROGRAM?

Although private schools differ from public schools on student enrollment, class size, staffing, and other characteristics, much of the school choice debate pays little attention to this diversity. Instead, it hinges on the assumption that private schools will eagerly participate in a voucher program. This implies that (a) a large number of private schools will be available to public school students, and (b) they will be anxious to accept transfer students from public schools. To test these assumptions, we asked private schools the following survey question:

> **If California implements the proposed Parental Choice in Education ballot initiative, or a similar plan, how likely is your school to accept transfer students from public schools in exchange for a tuition scholarship of $2,500 to $2,600?**

Private schools that indicated an interest in participating in a statewide voucher program are profiled in this section to provide a sense of the kinds of schools that would be available. Most private schools (75%; n = 732) anticipate they will accept public school students with vouchers. However, fewer than one in two (45%; n = 435) say their participation in a statewide voucher program is very likely. At the other extreme, one in four rates its likelihood as unlikely (10%; n = 100) or very unlikely (15%; n = 145).

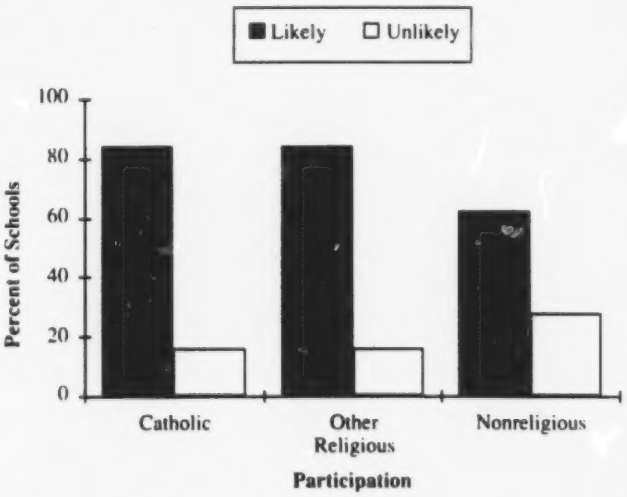
Private schools' interest in participating in a voucher program is related to their annual tuition, affiliation, and other factors. Catholic and other church-affiliated schools are more likely to participate in a voucher program than their nonreligious counterparts or higher-priced schools (Figure 1). Overall, about 84% of the Catholic (n = 214) and other church-affiliated private schools (n = 273) say they are either very likely or likely to accept voucher students from public schools. In comparison, 62% (n = 245) of the secular schools rate their possible participation in the voucher as very likely or likely. As we note later, Catholic and other religious schools charge lower student tuition than nonreligious schools. Their lower tuition may make the prospect of a $2,600 voucher especially appealing.

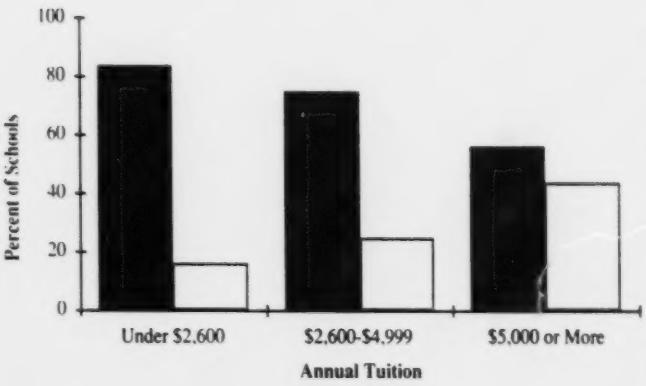
Low-tuition schools, which charge less than $2,600, comprise 58% of the sample. They are especially receptive to a voucher program (Figure 1). Over four fifths (n = 448) indicate they are either very likely or likely to accept voucher students from public schools.

Schools in the moderate-tuition range (charging between $2,600 to $4,999 annually) make up 29% of the respondent sample. They seem to find the prospect of a $2,600 voucher almost as attractive as the low-tuition schools; 75% (n = 200) are very likely or likely to accept public school students.

Figure 1

Which Private Schools Are Likely To Participate in a Statewide Voucher Program?





Schools with an annual tuition of $5,000 or more, which make up 13% of the respondent sample, are the least inclined to participate in a voucher program. Nearly half (44%; n = 70) say their acceptance of voucher students from public schools is unlikely or very unlikely.

Implications

A high rate of participation can be expected if a statewide voucher program like the one proposed in California is authorized. But participation will be unevenly distributed, depending on schools' tuition rates and affiliation. Most private schools are receptive to vouchers, but a closer look reveals that low- and moderate-tuition schools, and schools with Catholic or other religious affiliations, are more likely to accept public school students than other types of schools. Because substantially fewer high-tuition and nonreligious schools are receptive to a voucher program, public school parents wishing to redeem a voucher will find fewer of the most costly and, in some cases, most academically prestigious private schools participating in the program.

WHAT KIND OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS WILL BE AVAILABLE TO VOUCHER STUDENTS FROM PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

Small student enrollments, limited class size, and individual student attention often are listed as advantages of private schools. Do voucher-receptive private schools exhibit these advantages? We asked the schools to provide information on their enrollment, class size, and student-to-staff ratios. In addition, because private schools are frequently criticized for employing teaching staff who are not certified (i.e., licensed) by the state, we also asked the schools to report on the proportion of their teachers who hold California teaching certificates.

How Large Are Voucher-receptive Private Schools?

If California implements a statewide voucher program, public school parents who decide to use their children's voucher at a private school will find schools of various sizes, including those with small student enrollments. However, one of the most likely groups of private schools to participate in the voucher program—Catholic schools—also is the largest. The median Catholic school enrollment is more than twice that of other religious schools (median = 133) and more than four times larger than nonreligious schools (median = 76). It is rare to find a Catholic school that is as small as the largest nonreligious school. (Table A-3 arrays median enrollment for elementary and secondary schools. Throughout the report, tables with an "A" designation appear in the Appendix.)

Overall, parents could find elementary schools with enrollments of 79 or fewer students one quarter of the time. Similarly, there are high schools considerably smaller than the median enrollment (see Table 1). High schools are nearly twice the size of elementary schools. They have a median enrollment of 325 students, compared to 182 students in elementary schools.

Enrollment size is somewhat related to tuition levels. As one might

expect, median enrollment in low-tuition schools (median = 211) is twice that of medium- or high-tuition schools. But medium-tuition schools are slightly smaller (median = 109) than schools charging over $5,000 (median = 119). By shopping carefully, parents could find medium and high-tuition schools that are quite small. A quarter of the medium-priced schools have enrollments of 49 or fewer students, and a quarter of the higher-priced schools have a median enrollment of 65 or fewer.

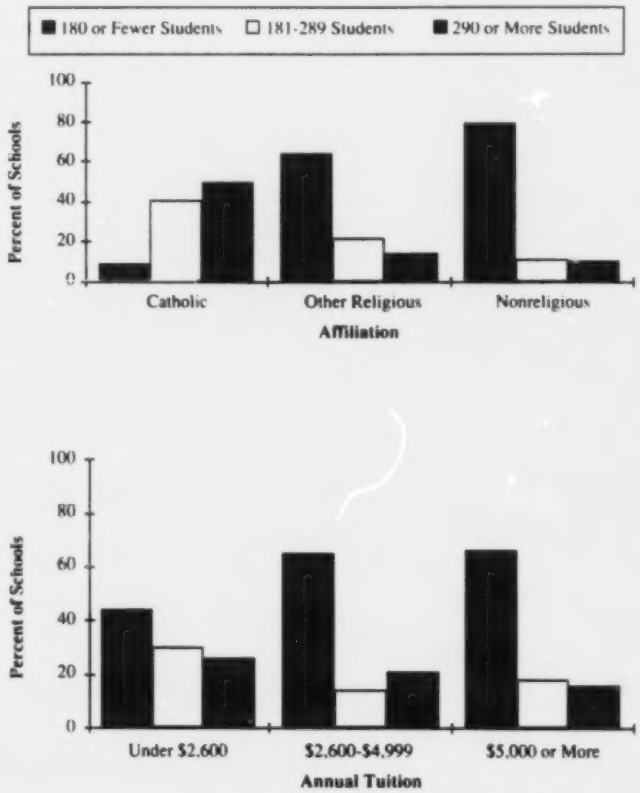
Table 1
Median School Enrollment in Voucher-receptive Schools

School category	School enrollment			
	n	*M*	Interquartile boundaries	
			25th percentile	75th percentile
Grade level				
Elementary	510	182	70	282
High school	50	325	126	548
Religious affiliation				
Catholic	214	290	252	328
Other religious	276	133	71	224
Nonreligious	249	76	40	158
Annual tuition				
Low	446	211	94	294
Medium	197	109	49	269
High	70	119	65	224

Figure 2 illustrates differences among schools of various affiliations and tuition levels. Half the Catholic (n = 107) schools have more than 290 students; only 8% (n = 19) have fewer than 180 students. In contrast, over three quarters of the nonreligious schools (79%; n = 189) have less than 180 students. Only 10% (n = 241) have enrollments that exceed 290 students. When we consider tuition, two thirds of medium-tuition (n = 129) and high-tuition (n = 46) schools have fewer than 180 students. However, less than half of the lower-tuition schools (44%; n = 196) are this small.

How Large Are the Classes in Available Private Schools?
Overall, class size in voucher-receptive schools is small. The average class size is 22 students. Classes in Catholic schools tend to be larger than classes in other private schools. Over two thirds

Figure 2
How Many Students Are Enrolled in Voucher-receptive Schools?



of Catholic schools (68%; n = 142) have classes with 30 or more students, and in 42% (n = 89) of these schools, classes have 35 or more students. The average class size in Catholic schools (elementary and secondary) hovers at 30 students (see Table A-4).

Because of high variances around the means, we also looked at median class size. In half of the schools (n = 341), median class size is 20 students or under (see Table A-5). While there is no guarantee that a child in a nonreligious or other religious school will be in smaller classes, one quarter of these schools offer class sizes of 15 or fewer students. Classes in the least expensive tuition schools also tend to be 50% larger than classes in the most expensive tuition schools. In schools where tuition is under $2,600, median class size is 24 students, while the median is 16 students for schools charging $5,000 or more.

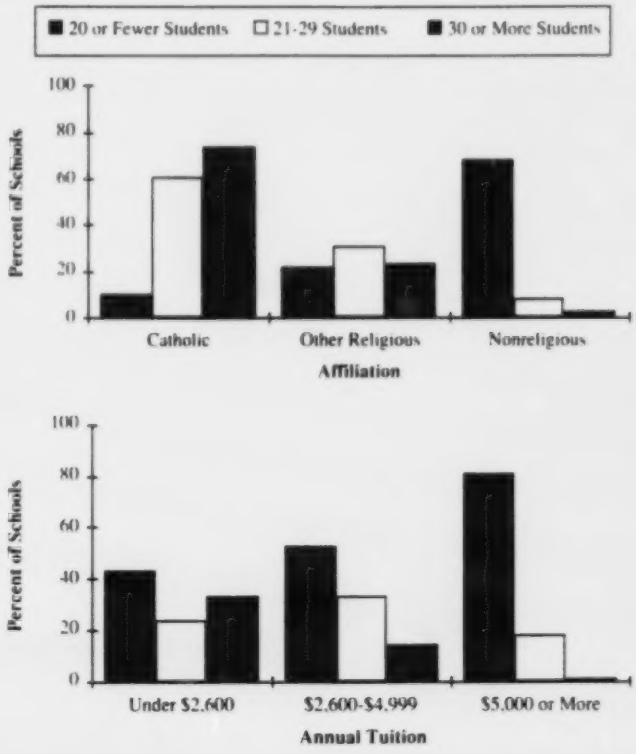
Three quarters of the time, parents seeking to transfer their children from public to private schools will find that classes in low-tuition schools can get as large as 32 students. Median class size in

high-tuition schools tends not to exceed 20 students.

The differences among schools are illustrated in Figure 3. Forty percent of low-tuition schools (n = 185) have classes with 20 or fewer students, compared to 53% for the medium-tuition category (n = 101) and over 80% (n = 101) for the high-end schools. At the other end, in about one third of the low-tuition schools (34%; n = 142), classes average 34 or more students. Only 14% of the middle-tuition group (n = 23) have classes this large. Such large classes are virtually nonexistent in the high-tuition schools. In fact, chances of finding small classes double if one pays $5,000 or more tuition. A parent can find some low-cost schools with small classes, but they are not as prevalent as they are in higher-priced schools.

Figure 3

How Many Students Are There Per Classroom in Voucher-receptive Schools?



How Large Are Student-to-staff Ratios?

On average, student-to-teacher ratios in voucher-receptive schools are 19:1. Student-to-administrator ratios are 150:1 (see Table 2).

The number of students per teacher is higher in elementary schools (21:1) than in high schools (15:1). Similarly, student-to-administrator ratios are higher in elementary schools (172:1) compared with high schools (116:1). However, as Table 2 shows, the standard deviation among elementary schools is extremely large (SD = 127). This indicates enormous variability in school size, and hence in the size of the schools' administrative staffs. Also, the differences between the class size figures reported earlier and the student-to-teacher ratios are due to the presence of more than one adult (i.e., certified teacher and instructional aide or assistant) in some classrooms.

Table 2

Student-to-staff Ratios in Voucher-receptive Schools

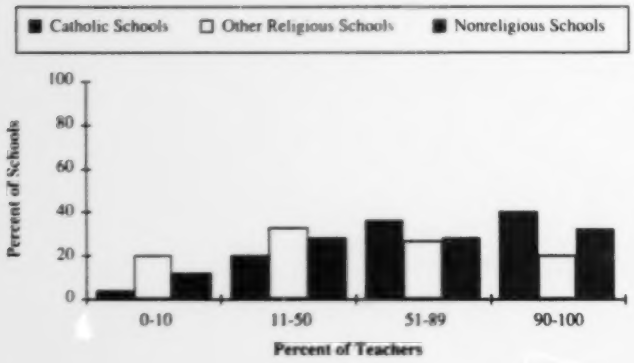
	Student-to-teacher			Student-to-administrator		
School category	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
All schools	711	19	9.62	699	150	120.66
Grade level						
Elementary	502	21	9.60	489	172	126.80
Secondary	69	15	6.02	50	116	76.20
Religious affiliation						
Catholic	210	28	6.09	211	247	99.90
Other religious	268	18	8.40	262	134	110.70
Nonreligious	233	12	6.10	226	78	84.70

In Catholic schools, the number of students per teacher almost doubles. The ratio is 28:1. In other private schools, the ratio hovers around 15:1. The differences in student-to-administrator ratios in Catholic schools compared to other private schools are even more striking. Catholic schools have nearly four times as many students pe administrator as nonreligious schools and twice as many students per administrator as other religious schools. By any measure—student enrollment, class size, and student-to-staff ratios—Catholic schools are larger than other private schools. Parents who decide to redeem vouchers at Catholic schools will find schools and class sizes reminiscent of the public schools their children left.

What Proportion of Private School Teachers Are Certified?

Two thirds of voucher-receptive private schools (60%; n = 418) report that more than half of their teachers are certified to teach in California public schools. With the exception of schools in the other religious category, even higher percentages report that 90% or more o their teachers hold teaching certificates that would enable them to teach in public schools (Figure 4).

Figure 4
What Percentage of Teachers in Catholic and Other Private Schools Have California Teaching Certificates?



Catholic schools have a higher percentage of certified teachers than other schools. In 40% of the Catholic schools (n = 81), at least 90% of the teachers are certified. Nonreligious schools follow with 32% (n = 79). Other religious schools are a distant third with only 19% (n = 50) reporting that 90% - 100% of their teachers are certified.

Teacher certification rates are higher in secondary schools than in elementary schools (Figure 6). About half of the secondary schools (52%; n = 25), but less than one third of the elementary schools (28%), report that between 51% and 90% of their teachers are certified. Still, 35% (n = 169) of the elementary schools report that nearly all their teachers are certified, a finding that mirrors the representation of Catholic and nonreligious elementary schools.

Implications

With some exceptions, the private schools that will be most available to public school students under a statewide voucher program—Catholic and low-tuition schools—enroll more students and have larger classes and higher student-to-staff ratios than other private schools. In fact, Catholic schools are more than twice the size of other religious private schools and more than four times as large as nonreligious private schools. Classes in those Catholic schools willing to accept voucher students are approximately three times larger than in other private schools. Student-to-teacher ratios are twice as large and student-to-administrator ratios are four times as large. While sending a child to a non-Catholic private school does not guarantee smaller classes, parents are more likely to find small classes in other religious and nonreligious schools. Some low-cost schools also have small classes.

According to the schools surveyed, high percentages of their teachers are certified to teach in California public schools. Parents seeking to enroll their children in a private school will find the highest proportion of certified teachers in Catholic schools; 40% report that 90% or more of their teachers are certified.

HOW MANY SPACES WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR VOUCHER STUDENTS FROM PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

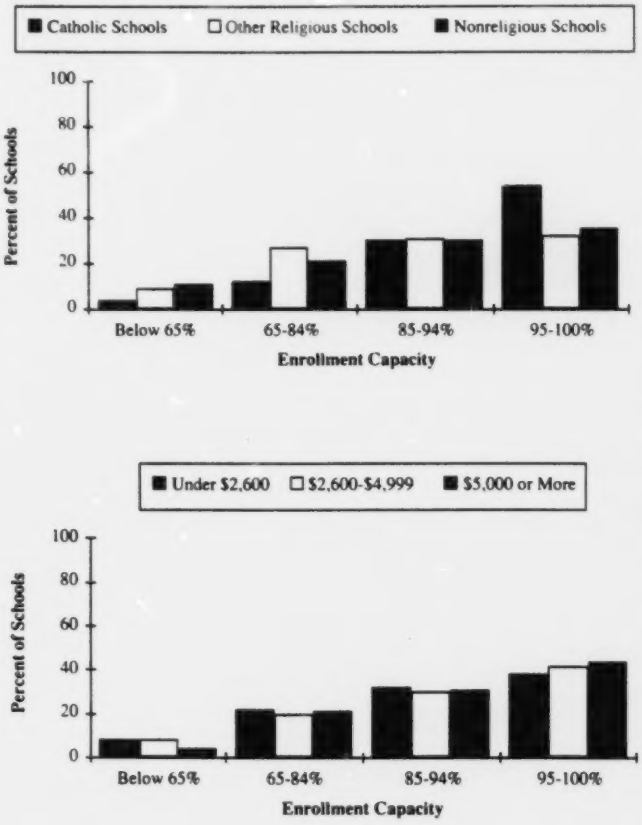
From the standpoint of parents and children in California, the number of *schools* choosing to participate in a voucher program is less meaningful than the number of *students* they potentially can accommodate. That is, if most private schools are already nearly filled to capacity, choice could become a mirage. The number of public school students that could be affected by a voucher program was estimated using current private school enrollments and responses to the following survey question concerning the schools' potential capacity:

> **How would you characterize your school's current enrollment? Check one: At 100% capacity; 95 - 99%; 85 - 94%; 65 - 84%; below 65% capacity.**

Most of the private schools interested in participating in a voucher program are nearly full. Only 8 % (n = 56) are below 65% enrollment capacity. Approximately one third (31%; n = 205) can expand by no more than 15% until they reach capacity, and 21% of the schools (n = 152) can expand by no more than 35% unless they remodel or expand their facilities. Forty percent of those most likely to accept voucher students (n = 174) report operating at near peak capacity (95% or higher). Over 70% (n = 304) are operating at more than 85% capacity.

Openings are not evenly distributed across schools. Over half the Catholic schools (54%; n = 114) are more than 94% full. Only about one third of the other schools are operating at this capacity (Figure 5). The fact that so many Catholic schools are at near capacity will restrict the availability of the private sector to public school students. About one third of California's private schools are Catholic schools.

Figure 5
Which Private Schools Are Full?



High-tuition schools have the least room; nearly half (44%; $n = 31$) are operating at or near full capacity Of these, 24% ($n = 17$) are full. However, the situation is only a little better in medium- and low-tuition schools. Over 40% ($n = 82$) of the moderate-priced schools and 38% ($n = 169$) of the low-priced schools are over 95% full. Very small percentages of schools in any tuition category are below 65% full.

Using the survey data, we estimated the number of available spaces in the existing population of California private schools as outlined below.

First, the available capacity of each school was subtracted from 100% and multiplied by its enrollment. For example, if a school has an enrollment of 75 children, but is operating at 75% capacity, it can potentially admit 25 more students, not counting possible expansion (considered later). Using this procedure, we found that the modal school has 19 spaces available. Therefore, 13,908 spaces are available in the 732 sample schools that indicated they were either very likely or likely to accept voucher students.

To project to the state as a whole, we assumed that the proportion of voucher-receptive schools in SWRL's respondent sample is representative of the state population of private schools. This assumption is supported by an analysis reported in the Appendix. In California, 2,717 private schools are eligible to participate in the proposed voucher initiative. Our estimates suggest that three fourths of the sample schools, or 2,037 schools, would accept voucher students. If the average school has 19 openings, 38,703 students potentially could participate in the voucher program under existing conditions. Therefore, under the existing system of private schools, only .8% of the state's public school students can expect to find spaces in the private sector. According to the California Department of Education, the state's public schools enrolled 4,950,474 students in 1991-92, the school year in which the survey was administered.[16]

This estimate is probably low because of additional spaces that may be available in Catholic schools. According to the California Catholic Conference, a number of schools statewide was closed for financial reasons. Many are located in inner-city areas where parents are unable to meet the schools' annual tuition and the Catholic Church is unable to subsidize the schools to keep them open. In addition, many of the state's Catholic elementary schools were designed as "triple-graded schools" with three classrooms at each grade level. As enrollment decreased, some of these classrooms were turned into science rooms, computer labs, etc. If the voucher initiative passes, schools could be opened and classroom space could be reconverted to accommodate voucher-redeeming students from public schools. Additional research is needed to determine how many schools and classrooms there are in this reserve pool.[17] Still, for the sake of this exercise, we have added 4,000 student spaces to our estimate, bringing the total number of available spaces to 42,703. This number represents an approximate 20% increase over the enrollment in Catholic schools statewide in 1991-92, but it is still less than 1% of the public school enrollment.

We also know that some of the existing schools will expand. In response to a question asking whether the school would remodel or expand the school plant, 42% ($n = 289$) of the voucher-receptive schools say they would. We can only speculate about the immediate effect of such plans on enrollment capacity, but it is reasonable to assume that some expansion will take place. If the 2,037 schools most likely to participate in a voucher program were to *double* their enrollments from 200 to 400 students, there would be room for another 163,000 students. This brings the total number of spaces to 4% of the public school students in California.

Finally, over time, new private schools might be created in response to the voucher. For the sake of discussion, if these new schools accommodate an additional 100,000 students, that would bring the total to 305,000 spaces, or 6% of California's public school enrollment.

Implications

Although our estimates about the number of spaces that might be available in private schools are conjectural, there are some implications worth considering. First, a voucher program potentially *could* affect 43,000 to 300,000 public school students, an extremely small *portion* of the public school student population in California. Second, our estimated upper limit, 200,000 students, is over half the state's current private school enrollment. Private schools either would need to increase in size dramatically or all of the currently closed Catholic schools would need to reopen to handle this kind of increase. In addition to growth within existing schools, a large number of new schools would need to be founded for the private sector to handle as many as 100,000 additional transfers from public schools. Our most generous estimate is a total of 6% of the California's public school students could find space in private schools, and that upper estimate seems unrealistic. It assumes an enormously ambitious building program that will sweep the state, swelling the private sector by more than 50%. We think, instead, private schools are not poised to accommodate many transfers, and therefore, dramatic growth is well beyond their capacity. Therefore, private schools' level of interest aside, a statewide voucher program will not significantly affect public school enrollment in the foreseeable future.

HOW AFFORDABLE ARE VOUCHER-RECEPTIVE PRIVATE SCHOOLS?

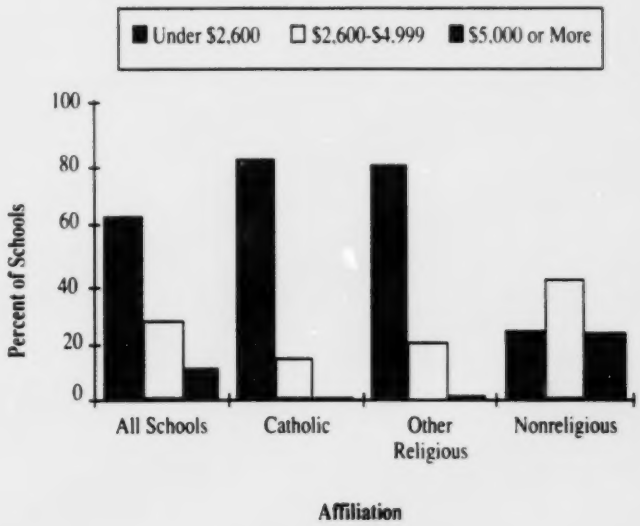
Aside from the availability of private schools in California, how affordable are they for the average or low-income family? According to the National Center for Education Statistics, average annual tuition for private schools ranges from less than $1,000 to more than $9,000 across the country.[19] What are the tuition fees in California? Will a $2,600 voucher, the figure in California's proposed Parental Choice in Education Initiative, enable low-income children from public schools to attend private schools or will it merely subsidize middle-income parents? (We did not collect information about other costs such as uniforms or books and materials.) To learn how much private schools cost, we included the following survey question:

> **What is the average annual tuition parents pay for each child enrolled in your school? Check one: Over $9,000; $8,000 - $8,900; $7,000 - $7,900; $6,000 - $6,900; $5,000 - $5,900; $4,000 - $4,900; $3,000 - $3,900; $2,000 - $2,900; under $2,600.**

The majority of private schools willing to accept public school students wishing to redeem a $2,600 voucher (64%; n = 448) charge tuition under this amount (Figure 6). Twenty-eight percent (n = 200) charge between $2,600 and $5,000. Ten percent ($n$ = 70) charge more than $5,000. There are some costly schools, too, of course, but only 9% (n = 85) charge above $6,000, and only 3% ($n$ = 30) of the survey respondents charge $9,000 or more (see Table A-6). As we discuss in this section, nearly all of the higher-tuition schools are high schools; less than 2% of elementary schools charge $6,000 or more.

Figure 6

How Affordable Are Voucher-receptive Schools?



Catholic schools are the most affordable voucher-receptive private schools. Eighty-five percent (n = 181) charge under $2,600 and only 2% ($n$ = 4) charge over $5,000. However, as mentioned previously, the survey findings indicated the affordability of Catholic schools is partially offset by the fact that they are already relatively full and therefore inaccessible to large numbers of students.

Still, given the reserve pool of Catholic schools, and classrooms within some Catholic schools, that we discussed earlier, there may be additional spaces available for students.

Other religious schools, 79% (n = 210) of which charge $2,600 or less, are almost as inexpensive as the Catholic schools. Nonreligious schools are more costly. Only one quarter of them (24%; n = 57) are in the low-tuition category; half (52%; n = 124) charge between $2,600 and $5,000 and another quarter (24%; n = 57) charge $5,000 or more (Figure 6). Therefore, parents whose children redeemed a voucher at these schools would have to augment the voucher with additional dollars to meet the schools' annual tuition.

When high schools are distinguished from elementary schools, the picture changes somewhat. High schools charge more than elementary schools. More than three out of four high schools (78%; $n = 53$) cost more than $2,600. The majority of high schools (57%; $n = 37$) charge between $2,600 and $5,000 and about one fourth (23%; $n = 15$) charge more than $5,000.

This holds across schools of various affiliations. For example, 94% of Catholic elementary schools, but only 41% of the high schools, cost under $2,600; the majority of Catholic high schools charge between $2,600 and $5,000 (see Table A-7). Similarly, only 13% of the other religious high schools have low-tuition rates; three fourths charge between $2,600 and $5,000. Half of the nonreligious high schools cost over $5,000. It appears, then, that the $2,600 voucher proposed by the Parental Choice in Education Initiative would cover annual tuition in the vast majority of private elementary schools, but relatively few high schools in California. However, the voucher initiative includes a provision that might help students defray high school costs. If a child attends an elementary or middle/junior high school that charges less than $2,600 annually, the surplus can be held in trust for the student for later application toward charges at any scholarship-redeeming school or California higher education institution.

Will voucher-participating schools increase tuition rates? Schools that indicated they would be very likely or likely to accept voucher students were asked whether they expect to increase or decrease their annual tuition. One third expect tuition to increase; 40% ($n = 170$) of the schools now charging under $2,600 expect increases (see Table A-8), but only 4% ($n = 26$) of all participating schools expect a large increase. Therefore, the picture could change, but there is no basis for anticipating a drastic escalation in tuition costs.

Implications

One criticism of a voucher program fixed at $2,600 is that it would subsidize middle-income parents choosing to pay higher tuition than the poor can afford. Our data indicate that this criticism is applicable to slightly more than one third of all private schools in California. However, nearly all Catholic elementary schools charge $2,600 or less. Catholic high schools typically charge more than $2,600. Because a substantial percentage of schools anticipate some increase in tuition, it is conceivable that schools whose tuition is below the voucher amount will be encouraged to raise their tuition to match the voucher. Nevertheless, low-income families would be able to afford the tuition to most elementary schools. The voucher would help defray some of the costs at high schools and would help moderate-income families as well.

WHICH PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS?

So far, we have focused on the availability and affordability of private schools. We now turn to a related issue: How accessible are private schools to voucher students from public schools, and to which students are they accessible? To gauge accessibility, we focus on two key issues. The first is transportation. How will voucher-redeeming students get to their school of choice? Is bus or public transportation available? We asked each school to tell us how students arrive at school. The second issue is the admissions criteria and procedures used by private schools. Will private schools admit students who are not doing well academically in public schools? What are the family incomes and demographic profiles of the students who private schools currently enroll? Will the schools accept similar or different students from public schools under a voucher program? We asked each school to describe the academic, financial, behavioral, and social criteria and procedures they use to admit students. The schools' responses provide some idea of the kinds of public school students they are likely to accept under a voucher program. Of course, the data we obtained from the survey do not take into account any changes schools might make in the future in their admissions criteria or arrangements to transport students to and from school.

Will Transportation Be Available for Voucher Students?

Voucher opponents are concerned that many low-income students will have difficulty getting to the school even if the voucher covers tuition costs. Therefore, we included the following survey question to gather information on how voucher students from public schools might get to private schools of their choice:

> **Please estimate the *percentage* of students who arrive at school by: family member's car; school bus; public transportation; walking to school.**

Although the schools' answers do not disclose special arrangements the schools might make for voucher students from public schools, they do indicate whether transportation could be a problem for students who cannot rely on an automobile. In 80% of schools interested in participating in a voucher program, over three fourths of their students arrive by family car (see Table 3). Nearly all of those same schools (96%) report that up to 25% of other students walk. Buses are seldom used. Bus or public transportation is available to more than half of the students in only 2% ($n = 51$) of Catholic schools and in 10% ($n = 47$) of other private schools. We found this of interest since the largest percentage of the responding schools (35%)

were located in Los Angeles County, one of the state's most populated counties where public bus transportation is widely available.[18]

Schools where many students use a bus or public transportation are the ones most accessible to low-income children. For example, there are 95 schools in which one fifth of the students use a bus or public transportation. Nearly one half of those schools charge less than $2,600 annually.

Table 3

Percentage of Students Arriving at School by Car, Bus, Public Transportation, or by Walking

	Car		Bus		Public transportation		Walking	
Percentage of students	*n*	(%)	*n*	(%)	*n*	(%)	*n*	(%)
0 - 25	25	3.7	649	96.0	649	95.3	671	95.7
26 - 50	45	6.6	10	1.5	22	3.2	26	3.7
51 - 75	69	10.2	10	1.5	7	1.0	2	.3
76 - 100	539	79.5	7	1.0	3	.4	2	.3

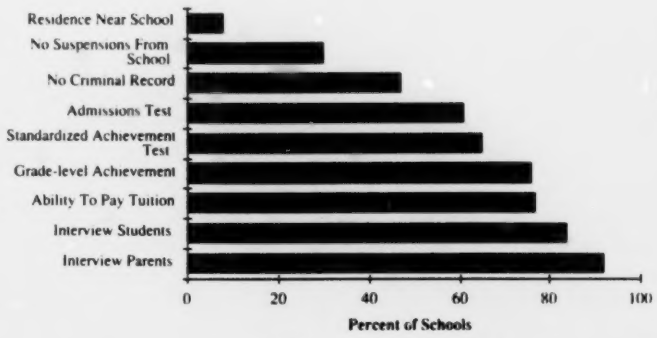
What Are the Admissions Requirements Of Voucher-receptive Schools?

If private schools were available to voucher students, and if they were accessible in terms of transportation, what kinds of students from public schools would they likely admit? Private schools have been accused of skimming the best and brightest students and leaving the others for the public sector. A close examination of private schools' admissions criteria—academic, financial, social, and behavioral—sheds light on the students private schools educate and, we assume, would continue to educate under a voucher program. Figure 7 presents overall findings. Each kind of requirement is discussed separately in this section, beginning with academic requirements.

Academic requirements. Most voucher-receptive schools (76%; n = 547) require students to demonstrate grade-level achievement prior to admission. In fact, grade-level achievement is the most frequently used academic requirement when compared with passage of a school-administered admissions test and submission of standardized achievement test scores.

Figure 7

What Are the Admissions Requirements of Voucher-receptive Schools?



The importance of grade-level achievement holds regardless of the school's religious affiliation, annual tuition, or age of students. For example, 88% (n = 183) of Catholic schools, 78% (n = 211) of other religious schools, and 64% (n = 153) of nonreligious schools make this a requirement.

Eighty percent (n = 153) of the low-tuition schools also expect students to meet admissions criteria related to grade-level academic achievement. And it is Catholic, other religious, and low-tuition schools that would be most readily available to public school students with vouchers. However, they are unlikely to be accessible to students who do not meet this academic requirement.

To put this information in perspective, we asked schools about the academic profile of their current students (see Table A-9). One quarter of the voucher-receptive schools say that more than half their students exceed the grade-level admissions requirement. In two thirds of the voucher-receptive schools, no more than 10% of students are below grade level. Nor do schools expect the achievement profiles of their students to change much under a voucher plan. About two thirds (61%; n = 419) expect no change (see Table A-10).

Similarly, when schools are sorted on minority student composition, with only minor fluctuations, most of them use grade-level achievement as an admissions entrance criterion (see Table A-11). In other words, minority students also must meet the schools' academic criteria. In this sense, it appears that private schools seek the best of both the minority and nonminority students. We can expect voucher-receptive private schools to attract the same kind of students they currently educate—students with at least average academic achievement.

Do voucher-receptive private schools provide academic scholarships? (See Table A-12.) Twenty-five percent do, but relatively few students at each school are scholarship recipients. Only a few schools (4%) provide academic

scholarships to more than 10% of their students; most higher-achieving students either pay their own way or perhaps receive scholarships from sources other than their private school.

Academic scholarships are more available at moderate- and high-tuition schools. About one third of the midpriced schools (31%) support less than 10% of their higher-achieving students through scholarships. Similarly, 20% of the high-priced schools support less than 10% of their students, while 8% make scholarships available to more than 10% of their students.

Financial requirements. Parents' ability to pay annual tuition is another major consideration among voucher-receptive schools; 78% (n = 555) report this is an admissions criterion (Figure 7). Parents' income is at least as important as students' academic skills in most schools, and more important in other religious and nonreligious schools, but not in Catholic schools (see Table A-13). Expectations that students' parents will meet annual tuition fees are related to tuition levels. Most low-tuition (80%; n = 351) and moderate-tuition (77%; n = 151) schools, but fewer high-tuition schools (65%; n = 45), expect parents to have the financial means to pay tuition fees.

On average, the elementary schools have low annual tuition; 68% (n = 342) report fees of $2,600 or less (see Table A-7). Most (79%; n = 391) expect students' families to meet the schools' tuition requirements. Only one in four high schools (28%; n = 14) has annual tuition this low; more than half (51%; n = 25) charge between $2,600 and $4,999. Overall, about two thirds of high schools expect parents to have the financial means to pay annual tuition (67%; n = 33).

As was true of academic-based scholarships, needs-based (i.e., financial) student scholarships are not widely available at voucher-receptive private schools (see Table A-14). In the overwhelming majority of schools (86%), no more than 20% of the students receive financial scholarships. But high-end tuition schools do offer more financial scholarships. Almost one third (29%) provide scholarships to 21 - 40% of their students. Only about 10% of low-tuition and 13% of moderate-tuition schools provide financial scholarships.

Social and procedural requirements. Interviews with students and their parents are part of the admissions procedures in nearly all of the schools interested in participating in a voucher program (Figure 7). This pattern holds regardless of the schools' annual tuition or religious affiliation. More of the high-tuition schools (94%; n = 65) interview students. Similarly, elementary schools tend to rely more on interviews with parents (94%; n = 467) than do high schools (77%; n = 36) (see Table A-15).

In contrast to interviews, residential proximity to the school is a minor admissions consideration. Only 8% (n = 56) of the schools say they draw their students from the neighborhood in which the school is located. Even when tuition and religious affiliation are considered, very few purposely select students who live near the school. Still, in the case of Catholic schools, preference is given to parishioners when schools are oversubscribed. Often children who attend Catholic elementary schools reside in the parish in which the school is located.

Behavioral requirements. Compared to private schools' other admissions requirements, relatively fewer screen students either for prior school suspensions or criminal records, both of which often are associated with low academic performance. Still, about half (47%; n = 319) ask about a student's criminal record; more high schools than elementary schools do so. Fifty-three percent of the high schools, but only 45% of the elementary schools, make this a requirement. Only one third of the schools (36%; n = 244), but about one half of Catholic schools (48%, n = 90), admit students who have no prior school suspensions (see Table A-16).

Implications

Critics of voucher programs argue that vouchers provide a means for private schools to "skim off" the most academically able public school students. In fact, our survey findings indicate that most voucher-receptive private schools do admit students whose achievement is at grade level. Many report that substantial portions of the students they currently enroll are achieving above grade level. Schools also do not plan for their students' academic profile to change under a voucher program; they would continue to seek students from public schools who meet their academic admissions criteria. Is this skimming? Voucher opponents say it is. Proponents counter that this is the segment of the education market that private schools have traditionally served. A voucher program will only expand their access to these students.

In most schools, parents' ability to pay annual tuition also is a major admissions criterion, especially among schools that have low tuition—elementary schools, most Catholic schools, and many schools in the other religious category. Students whose parents cannot meet annual tuition requirements of high-end private schools will find some assistance available in the form of school-provided scholarships. (We did not ask if other sources of financial aid might be available to students.) But spaces in high-tuition private schools are extremely limited. The openings will be in lower-priced schools; however, vouchers of $2,600 would defray all or a substantial portion of annual tuition at these schools.

Parents of public school students using a voucher in a private school should expect an interview with a school official as part of the admissions process. Most schools interview the child as well. And while voucher-redeeming students from public schools do not have to live near the private school they choose to attend, few private schools provide buses, and school access via public transportation is limited. Other arrangements might be made for voucher students who live too far to walk or are without a car; however, the survey findings suggest more limited access for poor children without a family car.

WILL MINORITY AND AT-RISK STUDENTS FIND OPENINGS IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS?

Some critics of private schools see them as havens for the white majority and fear private schools will be inaccessible to minority students. To the contrary, minorities already are well-represented in the private schools that expressed an interest in participating in a voucher program. The average enrollment across schools is 40% minority; half of the schools enroll more than 30% minority students (see Table 4).

Compared to other private schools, Catholic schools enroll a larger percentage of minority students. Over half of Catholic schools are predominantly minority, and in nearly one third of them, three fourths of the students are minority. This latter figure is more than twice that of the other schools (see Table A-17).

High-tuition schools enroll substantially fewer minorities than low-cost schools. In the average low-tuition school, 45% of the student body is minority, compared to 24% in the high-end schools.

Table 4

Mean Percentage of Minority Enrollment in Voucher-receptive Schools

	Minority enrollment		
School category	*n*	*M*	*SD*
All schools	698	40.9	31.5
Affiliation			
Catholic	197	57.2	30.2
Other religious	262	34.1	29.3
Nonreligious	240	32.0	29.5
Tuition level			
Low	427	45.1	32.6
Medium	192	33.8	29.1
High	68	24.1	21.0

Will vouchers increase or decrease minority representation in the private sector? In response to this question, 46% (n = 317) of the schools indicated they expect a small increase in minority students applying for admission, and 14% (n = 97) expect a large increase. Fewer than 1% (n = 4) expect any decrease (see Table A-18).

However, 70% (n = 162) of the nonreligious schools and 63% (n = 161) of schools in the other religious category expect at least some increase. Over one fifth of schools that charge more than $5,000 (23%; n = 15) expect a large increase in minority applications. Seventy percent of these schools (n = 46) expect some increase, as do two thirds of the schools (65%; n = 168) charging between $2,600 and $4,999. Almost half the Catholic schools (44%; n = 91) that already enroll a high percentage of minorities expect some increase. At best, these responses are a rough measure since we did not define for respondents what we meant by small and large increases. Still, vouchers are not likely to dramatically effect racial balance in the schools.

Regarding students most at risk of school failure, voucher opponents argue that private schools are poorly equipped to educate these students. While we do not know whether parents of such students would take advantage of vouchers, we asked private schools to report on various poverty and income indices. In addition, because the survey focused on choice in California, the nation's most linguistically diverse state, we asked the schools to report how many of their students are limited English proficient (LEP) and qualify for special English language support.

By and large, poor and language minority students do not attend voucher-receptive private schools. There are very few schools (9%; n = 66) where as many as one fifth of the students' families receive public assistance. Similarly, in most schools (88%) less than one fifth of the students are eligible for subsidized meals (see Table 5). But Catholic schools seem to have more children in this type of program than do other private schools. In nearly one in five Catholic schools, more than a fifth of the student body qualify for subsidized meals.

In addition, 15% (n = 84%) of schools report over half their students come from families with incomes over $60,000 (see Table A-19). Over half the high-tuition schools (53%; n = 29) report this income level for their students, as do one fifth of schools in the midtuition category (22%; n = 32) and one third of the nonreligious schools (31%; n = 57). In contrast, only 7% of Catholic and other religious schools indicate a majority of their students come from this income strata.

Table 5
Percentage of Students Qualifying for Subsidized Breakfast or Lunch

	All schools		School affiliation					
			Catholic		Other religious		Nonreligious	
Percentage of students	*n*	(%)	*n*	(%)	*n*	(%)	*n*	(%)
0 - 20	493	88.4	127	80.4	204	93.6	162	89.1
21 - 100	65	11.6	31	19.6	14	6.4	20	10.9

As for language minority students, voucher-receptive private schools enroll very few (see Table A-20). Fewer than one in five have a significant proportion of students who are not proficient in the English language (defined here as 10% or more of the student body). Even fewer schools (3.5%) provide some type of non-English language support for language minority students.

Finally, under 10% ($n = 66$) of voucher-receptive private schools report the presence of one or more special education programs. Three percent of the schools, on average, have such programs, but they are more prevalent in nonreligious schools than in the other private schools completing the survey. Fifteen percent ($n = 37$) offer one or more special education programs. Also, high-end tuition schools are more likely to offer such programs than other schools, with about one fifth ($n = 14$) doing so (see Table A-21). These schools may be among the private schools in the state that serve only students needing special education services.

Implications

Contrary to prevalent stereotypes, minority students are well-represented in private schools, especially in Catholic and low-tuition schools, the schools that are most receptive to a statewide voucher. It also seems possible that a voucher program will change the composition of the more expensive private schools, nudging them toward more diversity.

There is little evidence from the survey to suggest that voucher-receptive schools serve children from low-income families. Few students from families receiving public assistance are enrolled in the voucher-receptive private schools. And, with the exception of some Catholic schools, few students qualify for federally subsidized breakfast or lunch. Catholic and other religious schools also report that small percentages of their students come from high-income families, while more than half the students in high-tuition schools come from such homes. By and large, voucher-receptive private schools also do not currently serve students with special needs, including those requiring special education services or non-English language support.

Other findings suggest that high-end tuition schools have the resources needed to do what other private schools cannot. For example, they offer more needs-based scholarships than other private schools and they are more likely to offer special education services. Also, Catholic schools enroll disproportionately more minority students than other voucher-receptive private schools. Over half the Catholic schools are predominantly minority, and in one third of them, three fourths or more of the students are minority. This latter figure is more than twice that of other voucher-receptive schools.

WILL VOUCHERS CAUSE PRIVATE SCHOOLS TO CHANGE?

Since most private schools are already operating at or near enrollment capacity, we wondered whether the prospect of adding students would entice them to add staff and space, or make other changes to accommodate additional students. To find out, we asked schools the following survey question:

> **Would your school plan to make any of the following changes in response to the Parental Choice in Education Initiative or a similar measure? Hire additional teachers, school administrators, or professional staff members; change teacher qualifications; remodel or modify the school plant; offer new courses of study.**

Will Voucher-receptive Schools Add Staff?

The private schools that expressed interest in accepting voucher students from public schools anticipate hiring additional teachers and professional staff, but not more administrators (Figure 8). More than half the schools expect to hire teachers (58%; $n = 399$); only 14% ($n = 96$) plan to add more administrators. Few (9%; $n = 64$) would change their current requirements related to qualifications and years of experience when hiring additional teachers.

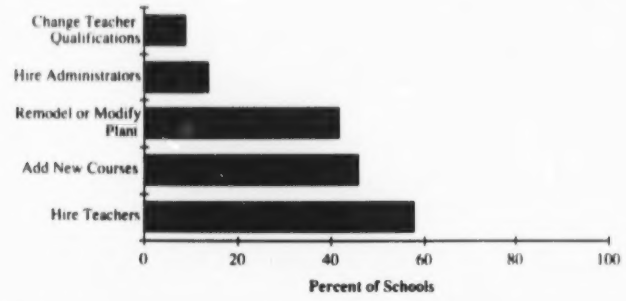
Catholic schools are the least likely to hire additional teachers. Only one third (37%; $n = 183$) would do so (see Table A-21). Three out of four of the other religious schools (73%; $n = 140$) say they intend to hire additional teachers. Similarly, only 6% ($n = 44$) of the Catholic schools would add administrators while 17% of the other religious ($n = 44$) and nonreligious schools ($n = 49$) would increase administrative staff.

Similarly, many of the schools (63%; $n = 242$) expecting large

enrollment increases plan to hire additional teachers. However, this is not true of Catholic schools. They are reticent to expand their teaching staff. Only about 40% (n = 40) of Catholic schools expecting large enrollment increases under a voucher plan to hire additional teachers. Few Catholic schools (10%; n = 10) also plan to hire more administrators, while one quarter (n = 38) of nonreligious and 37% (n = 29) of other religious schools plan to increase administrative staff.

Figure 8

What Changes Will Voucher-receptive Schools Make in Response to a Statewide Voucher Program?



Will Schools Add More Classrooms and Courses?

Almost half the voucher-receptive schools expect to offer new courses of study (47%; n = 321) and to remodel or change their building in some way (42%; n = 289). More of the schools expecting large enrollment increases have such plans. This is especially the case among the other religious schools. Two thirds of schools in the other religious category (66%; n = 100) would add to their buildings. Half of all schools (52%; n = 199) expecting large enrollment increases will add new courses of study. Again, Catholic schools—even those expecting large enrollment increases—are least inclined to increase school size; under one third (n = 33) have plans to remodel to accommodate additional students. This may be due to the fact that, as we reported earlier, there is extra classroom space in some schools. However, in contrast to their responses to staffing and expansion options, Catholic schools are as likely as other private schools to expand curriculum offerings. Over half of those (54%; n = 33) expecting large enrollment increases under a voucher plan to add courses of study.

Implications

From these results, we conclude that many private schools in California currently do not have the teaching staff or facilities needed to educate large numbers of voucher-redeeming public school students. However, a voucher program might prompt almost half the schools expecting transfer students to increase classroom space, teaching and administrative staff, and courses of study. More of the schools expecting large increases in students have expansion plans in terms of staff and space. But private schools are committed to lean administration, and consequently, even as they expand in other respects, few are likely to add administrators to their staff.

It is interesting that few Catholic schools plan to add teachers since they already have larger classes and higher student-to-teacher ratios than other private schools. Would a voucher program only magnify the large classrooms in Catholic schools?

CONCLUSIONS

Based on our survey, we conclude the following about the impact of a statewide voucher program.

A voucher program will affect an extremely small portion of public school students.
Although we expect a high percentage of California's private schools to take advantage of vouchers, most of the schools are operating at or near their enrollment capacity. While three fourths of the private schools express interest in a voucher program, over half can expand by no more than 15% unless they remodel and add classrooms. This means that few spaces are now available for students from public schools. This remains true even if we take into account additional spaces that may be available in Catholic schools as a result of reopening schools that are currently closed or filling additional classrooms that are not now used. In fact, we estimate that only about 43,000 public school students, or fewer than 1% of California's public school enrollment, can expect to find spaces in private schools. Barring a phenomenal expansion, or a large number of school reopenings as in the case of Catholic schools, a voucher program in California might affect up to 200,000 public school students, which is about 4% of the state's enrollment. This upper limit is unrealistic. It would mean increasing current private school enrollment by one half. We conclude it is well beyond the capacity of existing private schools to accommodate so many students. Similarly, a large number of new schools would need to be created to accommodate as many as 100,000 additional public school students. Therefore, a statewide voucher program will not significantly effect public school enrollment.

Currently, private schools have neither the teaching staff nor facilities to accommodate large numbers of transfer students from public schools.
Almost half the schools expecting transfer students plan to increase classroom space, teaching and professional staff, and courses of study. Schools expecting large increases in students, in particular, are likely to expand. However, Catholic schools, which now enroll approximately 60% of private school students in California, are an exception to this trend. While Catholic schools will add courses like other private schools, the majority of Catholic schools do not plan to remodel the school or add teaching staff.

The private schools that are most likely to accept voucher students from public schools are lower priced with religious affiliations.
Lower- and moderate-tuition schools, and schools with Catholic and other religious affiliations express more interest in transfer students from public schools than other private schools. Substantially fewer high-tuition, nonreligious schools are receptive to a voucher program. Parents can expect only limited access to those schools.

The schools that are most likely to be open to voucher students from public schools have larger classes than other California private schools.
Parents who are looking to the private sector as a source of small classes may be disappointed. Most of the seats available will be in larger schools with larger classes. The schools that are most interested in taking public school students, namely Catholic and low-tuition schools, also are among the largest private schools, with larger classes and higher student-to-teacher ratios. Nevertheless, there is a lot of variation, and therefore, parents will have some choice.

As it now stands, any child from a public school without access to a car may have difficulty getting to and from a private school.
A major issue is how students choosing to transfer from public schools will get to the private school of their choice. Most private school students now arrive at school by car. The remainder walk to school. Very few private schools provide buses, and public transportation is not widely used. Of course, this does not preclude special arrangements for voucher students, but it does indicate a potential problem that parents who do not have access to a car should consider.

Private schools will select public school students with satisfactory academic qualifications.
Critics say voucher programs will enable private schools to skim off high-achieving public school students. We found no evidence to dispute that charge, although skimming may not be the right word. Currently, grade-level achievement is the primary academic admissions criterion in private schools. Few schools expect to compromise academic standards or change the achievement profile of their students under a voucher program. Therefore, we conclude that private schools will not serve as an alternative for pubic school students who are not doing well academically. Such students will find few openings.

Minority students who meet private schools' academic admissions criteria will find space in private schools.
Some critics see private schools as havens for middle-class white parents when, in fact, minorities are well-represented in the private sector, especially in Catholic schools and those charging low tuition. Moreover, our data suggest a voucher program could even nudge some of the more elite private schools toward greater diversity.

The private sector does not now, and under a voucher program is unlikely to, educate many students from disadvantaged or language minority backgrounds, or students who need special education services.
With the exception of some Catholic schools, large numbers of poor and language minority students simply do not currently attend private schools in California. In fact, sizable percentages of nonreligious schools and private schools with high annual tuition report that more than half of their students come from homes where annual income levels are more than $60,000. With respect to the representation of language minority students, in over 80% of the schools surveyed, fewer than 1 in 10 students have limited English proficiency. Even fewer students require non-English language support. Finally, under 10% of the schools have one or more special education programs. When these programs are offered, they are most often provided in high-tuition schools, the schools least likely to participate in a voucher program.

A $2,600 voucher will pay the tuition to most private elementary schools, but to only one in five high schools.
One criticism of a voucher program fixed at $2,600 is that it would subsidize middle-income parents choosing to pay higher tuition than the poor can afford. Our data indicate that this criticism applies to only one third of the schools. Students from low-income families would be able to afford the tuition to most elementary schools. Elementary schools are affordable, but the majority of high schools are not. Most charge more than $2,600. The voucher would only help defray some of the costs at high schools. However, we have not considered incidental costs (e.g., uniforms, books) nor tuition increases. About 40% of voucher-receptive schools anticipate some increase in tuition. It is conceivable that the voucher amount will encourage schools with lower tuition to raise annual fees.

Some financial assistance is available for public school students who enroll in higher-tuition private schools.
Parents may not be aware that some scholarships are available from high-tuition schools to qualified students who cannot afford the tuition. Remember that spaces available in these schools are limited. There will be more openings at lower-priced schools where parents can expect to pay annual tuition fees and use the voucher to defray all or a portion of tuition costs.

SUMMARY

The initial effects of California's proposed voucher program may not be as far-reaching, nor as dramatic, as choice proponents suggest. First, the number of available private schools, and openings within those schools, are extremely limited. Although most private schools express interest in accepting voucher-redeeming students from public schools, the reality is that these schools are nearly filled to capacity. Unless they choose to expand their enrollment capacity or the number of schools increases dramatically, California's private schools can accommodate less than 1% of the state's public school students. The limited number of available openings tends to be in lower-tuition schools with Catholic or other religious affiliations.

Second, California's existing private schools will be accessible to a select group of public school students. While there are exceptions, the general trend is that these are students who: demonstrate at least grade-level achievement prior to admission, including minority students; come from families that can meet annual tuition fees or qualify for limited numbers of academic- and needs-based scholarships; can get to and from school by walking or by private car; and do not need special education, English language development, or primary language support services.

The private sector in California now occupies a special and numerically modest niche in the education market. We expect that to continue under a statewide voucher program barring the establishment of a large number of additional schools.

APPENDIX

RESPONDING SCHOOLS COMPARED TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS STATEWIDE

In May 1992, SWRL mailed surveys to all 2,717 private schools in California with enrollments of 25 or more students. Smaller schools were excluded because they were not eligible to participate in the voucher initiative, which served as the focus of the survey. The schools were those listed in the *California Private School Directory, 1991*, published by the California Department of Education. Each year private schools wishing to operate in California are required to register with the California Department of Education, which publishes the directory annually. It includes all private schools in California with six or more students.

Completed surveys were returned from 1,004 private schools, 37% of those surveyed. Since it is possible that certain types of schools might be more or less inclined to respond, we compared the survey respondents to the state population of private schools on the following basic parameters: school affiliation, school level, geographic location, and average student enrollment. In all cases, comparisons were between the respondent sample schools and private schools in the state data base with enrollments of 25 or more.

As Table A-1 illustrates, private schools completing the survey are comparable within one or two percentage points to private schools statewide that are eligible to participate in a voucher program.

Table A-1

SWRL Survey Respondents Compared to Voucher-eligible Private Schools Statewide

	All voucher-eligible private schools in CA	Private schools completing SWRL survey	Difference
	$N = 2,717$	$N = 1,004$	
Characteristic	(%)	(%)	(%)
School level			
Kindergarten	2.8	2.4	.4
Elementary	64.6	65.4	.8
K-12	24.1	23.1	1.0
High school	6.0	6.9	.9
Ungraded	2.5	2.2	.3
School affiliation			
Catholic	26.1	26.7	.6
Other religious	33.7	33.4	.3
Nonreligious	40.2	39.9	.3
School location			
Southern CA	62.8	63.4	.6
Northern CA	3.2	3.3	.1
Central CA	11.0	9.4	1.6
Bay area	22.0	22.2	.2

In addition, average student enrollment in elementary and secondary schools in the respondent sample mirrored private schools statewide (Table A-2).

Chi-square analyses confirmed there are no statistically significant differences between the sample and the state population. With respect to differences between categories of private schools within the respondent sample (e.g., Catholic, other religious, nonreligious), we did not systematically perform statistical analyses. However, we tried to focus on differences that our experience suggests would be statistically significant based on a sample of this size.

Table A-2

Average Enrollment in Responding Schools Compared to Private Schools Statewide

	All private schools in CA			Private schools completing SWRL survey		
Characteristics	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
Average student enrollment						
Elementary schools	1,756	189.9	134.7	657	194.8	141.9
High schools	162	490.9	382.1	69	441.2	394.5
All schools	2,717	191.0	192.9	1,004	205.2	199.5

SURVEY DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

We generated the items that appeared on the *School Choice Survey of California Private Schools* based on our review of the school choice literature, survey items others had asked private educators to complete, and our central interest in canvassing private schools to learn about their possible participation in a school voucher program.

Prior to administering the survey, we obtained a review from the California Association of Private School Organizations (CAPSO), which includes a broad spectrum of private school constituencies. CAPSO did not suggest changes in the survey. However, it felt that private educators might be reluctant to complete the survey because they were unfamiliar with SWRL. Therefore, we mailed the survey with a detailed SWRL cover letter that addressed key questions private educators might have about SWRL and our work on school choice. The letter explained that SWRL is a California-based educational research and development public agency that began its work in 1966. In addition, the letter specified that the intent of our federally supported work on school choice is to provide information to educators in the Western region (Arizona, California, and Nevada) with information on emerging educational issues.

On May 28, we mailed the *School Choice Survey of California Private Schools* to the entire population—2,717 private schools in California with an enrollment of 25 students or more. We asked respondents to complete and return the survey by June 12. We assured respondents their answers would be confidential. We also asked respondents to provide us with a current mailing address if they wished to receive a summary of the survey results. Five hundred and fifty four of the responding schools requested the summary.

Following our initial mailing, we used several techniques to secure a high return rate. Approximately one week after the survey was mailed, a reminder postcard was mailed to all schools. One week later, we mailed a second survey to all nonrespondents with a request that they return their completed survey by June 19. In addition, after reviewing initial returns, SWRL staff placed follow-up telephone calls during the first week of June to a random sample of 20% of the nonresponding schools. We received completed surveys through mid-July and included them in the analysis.

We also received telephone calls from private school organizations requesting information about SWRL and details concerning the survey. In response, we answered their questions about the survey and provided the organizations with copies of SWRL's *Institutional Overview*, which describes the Laboratory's projects, funding, staffing, and governance.

Finally, 2 of the 12 Catholic dioceses, representing 43 elementary and secondary schools, did not participate in the survey. One routinely advised its schools not to complete surveys, while the other did not want its members to participate in any survey that focused on vouchers. However, other organizations that contacted SWRL said they would advise their member schools to complete and return the survey.

TABLES

Table A-3

Median School Enrollment and Class Size in Schools by Affiliation and Grade Level

School category	*n*	*M*	Interquartile boundaries	
			25th percentile	75th percentile
School enrollment				
Elementary				
Catholic	176	286.5	250.50	316.75
Other religious	176	144.0	81.25	222.25
Nonreligious	145	70.0	43.00	143.00
Secondary				
Catholic	26	538.0	325.50	831.00
Other religious	8	132.0	64.25	314.25
Nonreligious	15	120.0	60.00	276.00
Class size				
Elementary				
Catholic	176	34.5	29.00	35.00
Other religious	176	20.0	16.00	25.00
Nonreligious	145	18.0	15.00	21.75
Secondary				
Catholic	26	27.5	25.00	30.25
Other religious	8	21.0	16.25	25.75
Nonreligious	15	15.0	14.00	20.00

Table A-4

Average Class Size in Voucher-receptive Schools

School category	Class size		
	n	*M*	*SD*
All schools	703	22.2	8.8
Religious affiliation			
Catholic	211	30.6	6.8
Other religious	259	19.4	7.1
Nonreligious	233	17.6	6.3
Annual tuition			
Low	432	25.7	9.3
Medium	189	20.9	7.6
High	68	16.9	5.2

Table A-5
Median Class Size in Voucher-receptive Schools

School category	Class size			
	n	*M*	Interquartile boundaries	
			25th percentile	75th percentile
All schools	703	20	15	29
Religious affiliation				
Catholic	211	33	30	35
Other religious	259	20	15	25
Nonreligious	233	18	13	22
Annual tuition				
Low	432	24	17	32
Medium	189	20	15	25
High	68	16	12	20

Table A-6
Average Annual Tuition in Voucher-receptive Schools

Tuition	Responding schools	
	n	(%)
Less than $2,600	550	57.5
$2,600 - $2,999	75	7.8
$3,000 - $3,999	123	12.9
$4,000 - $4,999	77	8.0
$5,000 - $5,999	46	4.8
$6,000 - $6,999	30	3.1
$7,000 - $7,999	14	1.5
$8,000 - $8,999	11	1.1
$9,000 or more	30	3.1

Table A-7

Average Annual Tuition in Elementary and High Schools of Various Affiliations

	Annual tuition					
	Under $2,600		$2,600 - $4,999		$5,000 or more	
School category	*n*	(%)	*n*	(%)	*n*	(%)
Elementary	342	68.0	125	24.9	36	7.2
Catholic	168	94.4	9	5.1	1	.6
Other religious	145	81.0	28	15.6	6	3.4
Nonreligious	29	19.9	88	60.3	29	19.9
High school	14	28.6	25	51.0	10	20.4
Catholic	11	40.7	14	51.9	2	7.4
Other religious	1	12.5	6	75.0	1	12.5
Nonreligious	2	14.3	5	35.7	7	50.0

Table A-8

Expected Changes in Annual Tuition Under a Voucher Program

	All schools		Tuition					
			Under $2,600		$2,600 - $4,999		$5,000 or more	
Expected change in tuition	*n*	(%)	*n*	(%)	*n*	(%)	*n*	(%)
Large decrease	66	9.8	56	13.4	9	4.8	1	1.6
Small decrease	70	10.4	41	9.8	20	10.6	9	14.1
No change	292	43.5	151	36.1	106	56.1	35	54.7
Small increase	217	32.3	147	35.2	51	27.0	19	29.7
Large increase	26	3.9	23	5.5	3	1.6	0	0

Table A-9

Grade-level Achievement of Students Currently Enrolled in Voucher-receptive Schools

	Achievement level			
	Above grade level		Below grade level	
Percentage of students	*n*	(%)	*n*	(%)
0 - 10	107	15.0	447	63.9
11 - 50	434	61.1	233	33.4
51 - 90	160	22.5	16	2.3
91 - 100	10	1.4	3	.4

Table A-10

Expected Changes in Student Achievement Under a Voucher Program

	Achievement level			
	Above grade level		Below grade level	
Expected change	*n*	(%)	*n*	(%)
Large decrease	1	1	15	2.2
Small decrease	31	4.5	47	6.8
No change	419	61.2	466	67.7
Small increase	192	28.0	140	20.3
Large increase	42	6.1	20	2.9

Table A-11

Percentage of High-minority Enrollment Schools Using Grade-level Achievement as an Admissions Requirement

School category	Minority enrollment		
	75 - 100% (*n* = 140)	85 - 100% (*n* = 107)	100% (*n* = 46)
All schools	73.0	71.4	63.0
School affiliation			
Catholic	79.4	77.6	65.2
Other religious	71.1	62.1	44.4
Nonreligious	61.3	70.4	71.4

Table A-12
Academic Scholarships Provided by Low-, Medium-, and High-tuition Schools

	All schools		Schools by annual tuition					
			Under $2,600		$2,600 - $4,999		$5,000 or more	
Percentage of student recipients	*n*	*(%)*	*n*	*(%)*	*n*	*(%)*	*n*	*(%)*
0	456	74.4	291	78.4	112	66.3	44	72.1
1 - 10	132	21.5	67	18.1	51	30.2	12	19.7
Over 10	25	4.1	13	3.5	6	3.5	5	8.2

Table A-13
Financial Requirements in Voucher-receptive Schools

	Ability to pay annual tuition	
School category	*n*	(%)
All schools	555	77.5
Affiliation		
Catholic	146	70.5
Other religious	224	83.6
Nonreligious	185	76.8
Annual tuition		
Low	351	80.1
Medium	151	77.4
High	45	65.2
School level		
Elementary	391	78.8
Secondary	33	67.3

Table A-14
Needs-based Scholarships Offered by Low-, Medium-, and High-tuition Schools

	All schools		Average annual tuition					
			Under $2,600		$2,600 - $4,999		$5,000 or more	
Percentage of students	*n*	*(%)*	*n*	*(%)*	*n*	*(%)*	*n*	*(%)*
0 - 20	598	86.0	379	89.2	166	87.8	44	63.8
21 - 40	78	11.2	36	8.5	21	11.1	20	29.0
Over 40	19	2.8	10	2.3	2	1.1	5	7.2

Table A-15
Social and Procedural Admissions Requirements in Voucher-receptive Schools

	Social and procedural requirements					
	Interview parents		Interview students		Residence near school	
School category	*n*	*(%)*	*n*	*(%)*	*n*	*(%)*
All schools	665	92.7	605	84.1	56	7.8
Affiliation						
Catholic	190	90.9	168	80.8	31	15.0
Other religious	251	93.7	227	84.4	13	4.8
Nonreligious	224	93.3	210	86.8	12	5.0
Annual tuition						
Low	405	92.5	361	82.2	40	9.0
Medium	183	93.4	166	84.3	10	5.2
High	65	94.2	66	95.7	6	8.8
School level						
Elementary	467	93.8	412	82.2	46	9.2
High school	36	76.6	40	83.3	1	2.2

Table A-16
Behavioral Requirements by Affiliation, Tuition, and School Level

	Behavioral requirements			
	No criminal record		No school suspension	
School category	*n*	(%)	*n*	(%)
Affiliation				
Catholic	106	54.6	90	47.6
Other religious	167	44.5	81	31.3
Nonreligious	96	43.0	73	32.0
Annual tuition				
Low	197	47.1	148	35.9
Medium	81	44.0	67	36.0
High	36	55.4	25	38.5
School level				
Elementary	212	45.4	178	38.0
High school	24	53.3	16	36.4

Table A-17
Percentage of Schools With Over 75% and Over 90% Minority Enrollment

	Over 75% minority		Over 90% minority	
School category	*n*	(%)	*n*	(%)
All schools	123	17.6	77	11.0
School affiliation				
Catholic	60	30.5	35	18.0
Other religious	34	13.0	19	7.3
Nonreligious	29	12.1	23	10.0

Table A-18
Expected Change(s) in Minority Student Populations in Voucher-receptive Schools

	Expected change									
	Large decrease		Small decrease		No change		Small increase		Large increase	
School type	*n*	(%)	*n*	(%)	*n*	(%)	*n*	(%)	*n*	(%)
All schools	2	.3	4	.6	273	39.4	317	45.7	97	14.0
School affiliation										
Catholic	2	1.0	2	1.0	110	53.7	64	31.2	27	13.2
Other religious	0	0	2	.8	94	36.6	124	48.2	37	14.4
Nonreligious	0	0	0	0	69	29.9	129	55.8	33	14.3
Annual tuition										
Low	1	.2	3	.7	184	43.5	178	42.1	57	13.5
Medium	1	.5	1	.5	65	34.0	102	53.4	22	11.5
High	0	0.0	0	0.0	20	30.3	31	47.0	15	22.7

Table A-19
Percentage of Students Whose Annual Family Income Exceeds $60,000

	Percentage of students			
	0 - 50		51 - 100	
School category	*n*	(%)	*n*	(%)
All schools	473	84.9	84	15.1
School affiliation				
Catholic	148	92.5	12	7.5
Other religious	197	92.9	15	7.1
Nonreligious	128	69.2	57	30.8
Tuition level				
Low	326	94.5	19	5.5
Medium	115	78.2	32	21.8
High	26	47.3	29	52.7

Table A-20

Percentage of LEP Students and Students Qualifying for non-English Language Support

	Responding schools	
Percentage of students	*n*	(%)
LEP students		
0 - 9	554	83.2
10 - 100	112	16.8
Students qualifying for non-English language support		
0 - 9	578	96.5
10 - 100	21	3.5

Table A-21

Percentage of Voucher-receptive Schools Offering Special Education Programs

	Number of special education programs					
	None		One		Two or more	
School category	*n*	(%)	*n*	(%)	*n*	(%)
All schools	668	91.3	42	5.7	22	3.0
School affiliation						
Catholic	206	96.3	8	3.7	0	0.0
Other religious	255	93.4	13	4.8	5	1.8
Nonreligious	207	84.5	21	8.6	17	6.9
Annual tuition						
Low	422	94.2	18	4.0	8	1.8
Medium	180	90.0	11	5.5	9	4.5
High	56	80.0	11	15.7	4	5.7

Table A-22

Anticipated Changes Due to Vouchers in Catholic, Other Religious, and Nonreligious Schools

	School affiliation					
	Catholic		Other religious		Nonreligious	
Anticipated change	*n*	(%)	*n*	(%)	*n*	(%)
Hire teachers	76	36.7	183	72.9	140	59.8
Hire administrators	13	6.3	44	17.4	39	17.0
Hire professional staff	128	61.8	188	62.2	116	50.9
Change teacher qualifications	17	8.2	27	10.6	20	8.5
Add new courses	101	27.3	133	35.9	136	36.8
Remodel or modify plant	60	20.8	132	45.7	97	33.6

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THE PARENTAL CHOICE IN EDUCATION INITIATIVE

The following Section, the "Parental Choice in Education Amendment," is hereby added to Article IX of the California Constitution:

Section 17. Purpose. The people of California, desiring to improve the quality of education available to all children, adopt this Section to: (1) enable parents to determine which schools best meet their children's needs; (2) empower parents to send their children to such schools; (3) establish academic accountability based on national standards; (4) reduce bureaucracy so that more educational dollars reach the classroom; (5) provide greater opportunities for teachers; and (6) mobilize the private sector to help accommodate our burgeoning school-age population.

Therefore: All parents are hereby empowered to choose any school, public or private, for the education of their children, as provided in this Section.

(a) Empowerment of Parents; Granting of Scholarships. The State shall annually provide a scholarship to every resident school-age child. Scholarships may be redeemed by the child's parent at any scholarship-redeeming school.

(1) The scholarship value for each child shall be at least fifty percent of the average amount of State and local government spending per public school student for education in kindergarten and grades one through twelve during the preceding fiscal year, calculated on a statewide basis, including every cost to the State, school districts, and county offices of education of maintaining kindergarten and elementary and secondary education, but excluding expenditures on scholarships granted pursuant to this Section and excluding any unfunded pension liability associated with the public school system.

(2) Scholarship value shall be equal for every child in any given grade. In case of student transfer, the scholarship shall be prorated. The Legislature may award supplemental funds for reasonable transportation needs for low-income children and special needs attributable to physical impairment or learning disability. Nothing in this Section shall prevent the use in any school of supplemental assistance from any source, public or private.

(3) If the scholarship amount exceeds the charges imposed by a scholarship-redeeming school for any year in which the student is in attendance, the surplus shall become a credit held in trust by the state for the student for later application toward charges at any scholarship-redeeming school or any institution of higher education in California, public or private, which meets the requirements imposed on scholarship-redeeming schools in Section 17(b)(1) and (3). Any surplus remaining on the student's twenty-sixth birthday shall revert to the state treasury.

(4) Scholarships provided hereunder are grants of aid to children through their parents and not to the schools in which the children are enrolled. Such scholarships shall not constitute taxable income. The parent shall be free to choose any scholarship-redeeming school, and such selection shall not constitute a decision or act of the State or any of its subdivisions. No other provision of this Constitution shall prevent the implementation of this Section.

(5) Children enrolled in private schools on October 1, 1991, shall receive scholarships, if otherwise eligible, beginning with the 1995-96 fiscal year. All other children shall receive scholarships beginning with the 1993-94 fiscal year.

(6) The State Board of Education may require each public school and each scholarship-redeeming school to choose and administer tests reflecting national standards for the purpose of measuring individual academic improvement. Such tests shall be designed and scored by independent parties. Each school's composite results for each grade level shall be released to the public. Individual results shall be released only to the school and the child's parent.

(7) Governing boards of school districts shall establish a mechanism consistent with federal law to allocate enrollment capacity based primarily on parental choice. Any public school which chooses not to redeem scholarships shall, after district enrollment assignments based primarily on parental choice are complete, open its remaining enrollment capacity to children regardless of residence. For fiscal purposes, children shall be deemed residents of the school district in which they are enrolled.

(8) No child shall receive any scholarship under this Section or any credit under Section 17(a)(3) for any fiscal year in which the child enrolls in a non-scholarship-redeeming school, unless Legislature provides otherwise.

(b) Empowerment of Schools; Redemption of Scholarships. A private school may become a scholarship-redeeming school by filing with the State Board of Education a statement indicating satisfaction of the legal requirements which applied to private schools on October 1, 1991, and the requirements of this Section.

(1) No school which discriminates on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, or national origin may redeem scholarships.

(2) To the extent permitted by this Constitution and the Constitution of the United States, the State shall prevent from redeeming scholarships any school which advocates unlawful behavior; teaches hatred of any person or group on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, national origin, religion, or gender; or deliberately provides false or misleading information respecting the school.

(3) No school with fewer than 25 students may redeem scholarships, unless the Legislature provides otherwise.

(4) Private schools, regardless of size, shall be accorded maximum flexibility to educate their students and shall be free from unnecessary, burdensome, or onerous regulation. No regulation of private schools, scholarship-redeeming or not, beyond that required by this Section and that which applied to private schools on October 1, 1991, shall be issued or enacted, unless approved by a three-fourths vote of the Legislature or, alternatively, as to any regulation pertaining to health, safety, or land use imposed by any county, city, district, or other subdivision of the State, a two-thirds vote of the governmental body issuing or enacting it shall have the burden of establishing that the regulation: (A) is essential to assure the health, safety, or education of students, or, as to any land use regulation, that the governmental body has a compelling interest in issuing or enacting it; (B) does not unduly burden or impede private schools or the parents of students therein; and (C) will not harass, injure, or suppress private schools.

(5) Notwithstanding Section 17(b)(4), the Legislature may (A) enact civil and criminal penalties for schools and persons who engage in fraudulent conduct in connection with the solicitation of students or the redemption of scholarships, and (B) restrict or prohibit individuals convicted of (i) any felony, (ii) any offense involving lewd or lascivious conduct, or (iii) any offense involving molestation or other abuse of a child, from owning, contracting with, or being employed by any school, public or private.

(6) Any school, public or private, may establish a code of conduct and discipline and enforce it with sanctions, including dismissal. A student who is deriving no substantial academic benefit or is responsible for serious or habitual misconduct related to the school may be dismissed.

(7) After the parent designates the enrolling school, the State shall disburse the student's scholarship funds, excepting funds held in trust pursuant to Section 17(a)(3), in equal amounts monthly, directly to the school for credit to the parent's account. Monthly disbursals shall occur within 30 days of receipt of the school's statement of current enrollment.

(8) Expenditures for scholarships issued under this Section and savings resulting from the implementation of this Section shall count toward the minimum funding requirements for education established by Sections 8 and 8.5 of Article XVI. Students enrolled in scholarship-redeeming schools shall not be counted toward enrollment in public schools and community colleges for purposes of Section 8 and 8.5 of Article XVI.

(c) Empowerment of Teachers; Conversion of Schools. Within one year after the people adopt this Section, the Legislature shall establish an expeditious process by which public schools may become independent scholarship-redeeming schools. Such schools shall be common schools under this Article, and Section 6 of this Article shall not limit their formation.

(1) Except as otherwise required by this Constitution and the Constitution of the United States, such schools shall operate under laws and regulations no more restrictive than those applicable to private schools under Section 17(b).

(2) Employees of such schools shall be permitted to continue and transfer their pension and health care programs on the same terms as other similarly situated participants employed by their school district so long as they remain in the employ of any such school.

(d) Definitions.

(1) "Charges" include tuition and fees for books, supplies, and other educational costs.

(2) A "child" is an individual eligible to attend kindergarten or grades one through twelve in the public school system.

(3) A "parent" is any person having legal or effective custody of a child.

(4) "Qualified electors" are persons registered to vote, whether or not they vote in any particular election. The alternative requirement in Section 17(b)(4) of approval by a majority vote of qualified electors within the affected jurisdiction shall be imposed only to the extent permitted by this Constitution and the Constitution of the United States.

(5) The Legislature may establish reasonable standards for determining the "residency" of children.

(6) "Savings resulting from the implementation of this Section" in each fiscal year shall be the total amount disbursed for scholarships during that fiscal year subtracted from the product of (A) the average enrollment in scholarship-redeeming schools during that fiscal year multiplied by (B) the average amount of State and local government spending per public school student for education in kindergarten and grades one through twelve, calculated on a statewide basis during that fiscal year.

(7) A "Scholarship-redeeming school" is any school, public or private, located within California, which meets the requirements of this Section. No school shall be compelled to become a scholarship-redeeming school. No school which meets the requirements of this Section shall be prevented from becoming a scholarship-redeeming school.

(8) "State and local government spending" in Section 17(a)(1) includes, but is not limited to, spending funded from all revenue sources, including the General Fund, federal funds, local property taxes, lottery funds, and local miscellaneous income such as developer fees, but excluding bond proceeds and charitable donations. Notwithstanding the inclusion of federal funds in the calculation of "state and local government spending," federal funds shall constitute no part of any scholarship provided under this Section.

(9) A "student" is a child attending school.

(e) Implementation. The Legislature shall implement this Section through legislation consistent with the purposes and provisions of this Section.

(f) Limitation of actions. Any action or proceeding contesting the validity of (1) this Section, (2) any provision of this Section, or (3) the adoption of this Section, shall be commenced within six months from the date of the election at which this Section is approved; otherwise this Section and all of its provisions shall be held valid, legal, and uncontestable. However, this limitation shall not of itself preclude an action or proceeding to challenge the application of this Section or any of its provisions to a particular person or circumstance.

(g) Severability. If any provision of this Section or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remaining provisions or applications shall remain in force. To this end the provisions of this Section are severable.

SCHOOL CHOICE SURVEY OF CALIFORNIA PRIVATE SCHOOLS

1. If California implements the proposed Parental Choice in Education ballot initiative, or a similar plan, how likely is your school to accept transfer students from public schools in exchange for a tuition scholarship of $2,500 to $2,600? (Check one.)

_____a. Very likely
_____b. Likely
_____c. Unlikely
_____d. Very unlikely

IF YOUR ANSWER TO QUESTION 1 WAS "VERY LIKELY," GO TO QUESTION 4.

2. For the following question, assume that the Parental Choice in Education ballot initiative, or some similar measure, becomes law. To what extent do you expect increases or decreases in each of the following at your school?
(Circle one response for each item.)

LD = *Large Decrease*
SD = *Small Decrease*
NC = *No Change*
SI = *Small Increase*
LI = *Large Increase*

a. Number of students applying for admission	LD	SD	NC	SI	LI
b. Number of students admitted	LD	SD	NC	SI	LI
c. Tuition charged to parents	LD	SD	NC	SI	LI
d. Number of students from racial/ethnic minority groups	LD	SD	NC	SI	LI
e. Number of students achieving at grade level	LD	SD	NC	SI	LI
f. Number of students qualifying for financial aid based on family income	LD	SD	NC	SI	LI
g. Number of students achieving below grade level	LD	SD	NC	SI	LI
h. Number of students achieving above grade level	LD	SD	NC	SI	LI
i. Number of limited English proficient students	LD	SD	NC	SI	LI

3. Would your school plan any of the following types of changes in response to the Parental Choice in Education Initiative or a similar measure?
(Circle YES or NO for each item.)

a. Hire additional classroom teachers	YES	NO
b. Hire additional school administrators	YES	NO
c. Hire other additional professional staff members	YES	NO
d. Change teacher qualifications/experience requirements	YES	NO
e. Remodel or modify school plant	YES	NO
f. Offer new courses of study	YES	NO

4. Is your school affiliated with a religious organization? (Check one.)

_____YES

_____NO

If YES, please specify:_____

5. How would you characterize your school's current enrollment? (Check one.)

_____a. At 100% capacity

_____b. At 95 - 99%

_____c. At 85 - 94%

_____d At 65 - 84%

_____e. Below 65% capacity

6. What is the average class size (i.e., # of students per classroom) for the highest grade level in your school?

Number of students:_____

7. Do your school's admission criteria/procedures include any of the following? (Circle YES or NO for each item.)

a. Written application	YES	NO
b. Admissions test(s) tailored for this school	YES	NO
c. Standardized achievement test scores	YES	NO
d. Student grade level achievement	YES	NO
e. Ability of parents to meet annual tuition fees	YES	NO
f. Interviews with students	YES	NO
g. Interviews with parents	YES	NO
h. Residence near the school	YES	NO
i. No criminal record	YES	NO

k. Other (Explain.)_____

8. Please estimate the percentage of students who arrive at school by:
(Percentages should total 100%.)

a. Family member's car _____%
b. School bus _____%
c. Public transportation _____%
d. Walking to school _____%

9. What percentage of students who applied for admission to your school in 1991-92 were admitted? (Check one.)

_____a. 100%
_____b. 75 - 99%
_____c. 50 - 74%
_____d. 26 - 49%
_____e. 25% or less

10. Please estimate the <u>percentage</u> of students in your school who are:

a. Members of racial/ethnic minority groups _____%
b. Limited English proficient speakers _____%
c. Non-English speakers _____%

11. Please estimate the <u>percentage</u> of students in your school who:

a. Receive scholarships based on family income _____%
b. Qualify for school-provided breakfast and/or lunch _____%
c. Reside with families receiving public assistance _____%
d. Receive academic scholarships _____%
e. Qualify for non-English language support _____%
f. Qualify for special education placement _____%

12. Please estimate the percentage of students in your school whose academic achievement is:
(Percentages should total 100%.)

a. At grade level _____%
b. Above grade level _____%
c. Below grade level _____%
Total 100%

13. What is the average annual tuition parents pay for each child enrolled in your school? (Check one.)

_____a. Over $9,000
_____b. $8,000 - $8,999
_____c. $7,000 - $7,999
_____d. $6,000 - $6,999
_____e. $5,000 - $5,999
_____f. $4,000 - $4,999
_____g. $3,000 - $3,999
_____h. $2,000 - $2,999
_____i. Under $2,600

14. Do the annual tuition fees cover the total cost of a student's education? (Check one.)

_____YES
_____NO
If NO, approximately what percentage do tuition fees cover?
_____a. 75 - 95%
_____b. 50 - 74%
_____c. 26 - 49%
_____d. 10 - 25%
_____e. less than 10%

15. Please estimate the percentage of your students with family income in each category. (Percentages should total 100%.)

a. $100,000 or more _____%
b. $80,000 - $99,999 _____%
c. $60,000 - $79,999 _____%
d. $40,000 - $59,999 _____%
e. $20,000 - $39,999 _____%
f. $10,000 - $19,999 _____%
g. Less than $10,000 _____%

Total 100%

16. What <u>percentage</u> of your teachers are certified to teach in California public schools?

_____%

17. How do the average salaries paid to your teachers compare with salaries of public school teachers teaching comparable subjects and grade levels? (Check one.)

_____a. Above those public schools pay
_____b. About the same
_____c. Below those public schools pay

18. Please indicate the <u>number</u> of individuals at your school in each of the following positions.

a. Full-time classroom teachers _____
b. School administrators _____
c. Teacher aides or instructional assistants _____
d. Other professional staff _____

Thank you. Return completed survey to SWRL, 4665 Lampson Ave., Los Alamitos, CA 90720.

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NOTES

1. Henry M. Levin, (1979, July). Educational vouchers and social policy (Report No. 79-B12). Stanford, CA: Institute for Research on Educational Finance and Governance.

2. An analysis of California's proposed 1992 voucher initiative. (1991, November). Sacramento: California School Boards Association.

3. Jean Merl, (1992, June 26). School voucher initiative falls short of ballot. Los Angeles Times, p. A-1; Dan Fromkin, (1992, August 21). Vote on school choice set in '94. Orange County Register, p. A-1.

4. The Parental Choice in Education Initiative stipulated a voucher of "at least 50% of prior fiscal year pupil state and local government spending for education." Since this was approximately $5,200 for FY 1992, the voucher amount was $2,600.

5. Full Text: The Parental Choice in Education Initiative (116629.VI), November 19, 1991, or the Final Title and Summary of The Parental Choice in Education Initiative prepared by California's Attorney General. The title appeared on signature petitions and, if the initiative had qualified, would have appeared on the November 1992 ballot.

6. For a review of state-by-state activities, see Jean Allen with Angela Hulsey, (1992, March). School choice programs: What's happening in the states. Washington, D.C.: Heritage Foundation. Within the Western region (Arizona, California, and Nevada), see the following three articles: Mary Amsler, (1992). Choice heats up (Policy Update Number Two). San Francisco: Far West Laboratory; Julia Jobaco, (1992, February 22). Choice of schools a reality in Arizona. The Arizona Republic, p. A-1; Ed Vogel, (1992, May 23). Legislators turn down school choice plan. Las Vegas Sun, p. A-23. A 1991 education task force appointed by Arizona's governor voted last year to recommend private school choice, open enrollment, and charter schools. A bill that would have given parents vouchers to pay for private school tuition was introduced in Nevada in 1992 but was not reported out of subcommittee.

7. Robert S. Peterkin, (1990, December/1991, January). What's happening in Milwaukee? Educational Leadership, 48(4), 50-52; Witte, J. F., (1991). Choice in American education. Charleston, WV: Appalachia Educational Laboratory; Mark Walsh, (1992, March 11). Wisconsin court upholds state's test of vouchers: Choice forces hail win for private-school plan. Education Week, pp. 1 & 27. Passed by the Wisconsin legislature in 1989, the Milwaukee plan provides up to 1% of the district's 100,000 students—most of whom are poor and minority—with $2,500 to attend private, nonreligious private schools within the district that are certified by the state. Approximately 600 students enrolled in seven private schools at the beginning of the 1992 academic year. Recent challenges in the courts ended with a 4-to-3 ruling by the Wisconsin Supreme Court upholding the program on educational and constitutional grounds. Choice proponents have suggested this will encourage other state legislators to enact similar experimental choice programs. In addition, the decision provides a legal foothold and judicial precedent relevant to other publicly funded choice programs that include private schools.

8. The proposed California ballot initiative is restricted to schools enrolling 25 or more students. "No school with fewer than 25 students may redeem scholarships, unless the Legislature provides otherwise" (The Parental Choice in Education Initiative, Article IX, Section 17, b[3]).

9. John E. Chubb & Terry M. Moe, (1990). Politics, markets, and America's schools. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution; Paul Richter, (1991, May 18). Survival of the fittest schools. Los Angeles Times, p. A-1; Myron Lieberman, (1989). Privatization and educational choice. St. Martin's Press.

10. Kevin Teasley, (1992, June 10). Parental choice initiative. Los Angeles Times, p. A-23.

11. Robert A. Jordan, (1991, April 13). Voucher system no help to poor kids. Long Beach Press Telegram, p. B-5; resolution in opposition to the parental choice/scholarship initiative published by the Committee to Educate Against Vouchers (a committee of major public education interests).

12. Skimming off the cream of schools. (1991, July 5). New York Times, p. A-16; John E. Chubb & Terry M. Moe (1990). Politics, markets, and America's schools. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution.

13. William Trombley, (1992, January 2). Educators group calls school voucher ballot proposal 'evil'. Los Angeles Times, p. A-3; Kenneth Hall, (1992, January 28). Arguments against the school voucher initiative. Remarks at the Association of California School Administrators' Superintendents' Symposium, Monterey, CA.

14. Arturo Madrid & Juan Francisco Lara, (1990, January 8). For the poor, school choice is next to no choice at all. Los Angeles

Times, p. A-4; Robert Genetski, (1992, July 8). Private schools, public savings. Wall Street Journal, p. A-10.

15. Saul M. Yanofsky & Laurette Young, (1992, February). A successful parents' choice program. Phi Delta Kappan, pp. 476 - 479; Joseph Alibrandi & Kevin D. Teasley, (1992, March 2). Power to the parents. Los Angeles Times, p. B-5; California Catholic school superintendents, (1992, January 22). The current parental choice in education amendment and the California Catholic schools. Oakland, CA: Diocese of Oakland School Department; John E. Coons & Stephen D. Sugarman, (December 1990/January 1991). The private school option in systems of educational choice. Educational Leadership, 48(4), 54-56.

16. California Department of Education, (1992). California Department of Education's Factsheet: 1991-92 Handbook of Education Information. Author: Sacramento.

17. J. McElligott (personal communication, December 9, 1992)

18. Thirty-five percent of responding schools (n = 358) were located in Los Angeles County (40.8% of Catholic, 34.6% of other religious, and 32.4% of nonreligious schools). According to the California Department of Education, 34.9% of all private schools are located in Los Angeles County.

19. U.S. Department of Education, (1992). The Condition of Education, 1992. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.

Nationally Known Sociologist Says

Preoccupation with School Choice Obscures Limited Number of Ways To Reform Public Schools

PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND PARENTAL CHOICE
Dubious Assumptions, Frail Claims, and Excessive Hyperbole

Ronald G. Corwin
SWRL

1993

Ronald G. Corwin writes in his provocative new monograph: "**Competition between public and private schools isn't the way to improve either.**"

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